

Elisha Wells House  
30 John Street  
Providence  
Providence County  
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-245

HABS  
RI,  
4-PROV,  
142-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
ELISHA WELLS HOUSE

HABS No. RI-245

<u>Address:</u>	30 John Street, Providence, Providence County, Rhode Island - Plat 16, Lot 248	HABS RI, 4-PROV, 142-
<u>Present Owner:</u>	John Thayer Company (Arnold J. Green).	
<u>Present Occupant</u> <u>and Use:</u>	Mr. and Mrs. Arnold J. Green Dwelling.	
<u>Brief Statement</u> <u>of Significance:</u>	This is a medium-sized, frame house, typical of the period of c. 1815-1825.	

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners:

1824 Betsy Ashton Sells for \$280 to Elisha Wells, tailor, a certain lot of land in the S/ly part of Providence bounded: S by John Street 55'; W by Edward S Burroughs 120'; N by Williams Thayer 55'; Deed Book 49, page 32, in Providence City Hall.

1824 Elisha Wells lived here. - Providence Directory.

1826 FIRE RECORD: Elisha C Wells insures for \$1700 a house on the N side of John Street..wood..26' front by 36' front to back..2 stories high in front and rear and 3 stories at 1 end..occupied for a Dwelling House. - Mss. fire insurance records of the Providence Mutual Insurance Co. at the Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, R. I., Vol. 4, policy #3210.

1846 Elisha C Wells quit claims to Sabra Horton a certain lot of land with a Dwelling house and other buildings and improvements thereon standing but with NO Well privileges, bounded: S by John Street 55'; W by Christopher Pierce 115'; N by Williams Thayer 55'; E by fence and other land of Elisha Wells 115'; - Deed Book 102, page 287, in Providence City Hall.

1890 WILL: Sabra Horton in trust for her husband Lucius Horton. Upon his death in equal quarterly payments to her four children; Henry, Walter S. Horton, Lydia Williams and Lizzie B Rose. - Wills Book 33, page 507, in Providence City Hall.

1924 Adelaide F Horton, widow of Walter S. Horton, sells to John Thayer Company a certain tract of land with all buildings and improvements thereon, comprising lots #518, #247, #248 (this lot) and #249 on Plat #16 on the Assessor's plat. Bounded S by John Street 145'; W by Thayer Street 120'; N by Desmond Fitzgerald et al 145'; E by Estelle Rubin 120'. - Deed Book 658, page 80, in Providence City Hall.

2. Date of erection: 1824.

Prepared by Antoinette F. Downing and Elvira Gowdey  
For the Providence Preservation Society  
August 1962

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This is a typical frame house of the period c. 1815-1825, set end to the street, two-and-a-half stories high, gable roofed with a rope molding cornice carried across the gable end, and an elliptical fanlight doorway with rusticated trim.
2. Condition of fabric: Good. Interior detail altered by Eric Green, father of present owner-occupant.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Main block about 24' (three bays) x 36', facing south. Two-and-a-half stories on elevated ground floor. Rear wing about 24' deep, one story.
2. Foundations: Fieldstone, stuccoed, on sides. Brick on front.
3. Wall construction: Frame, clapboards, corner boards.
4. Stoops: Later wood entrance stoop, eight steps high to front door. Door underneath to lower floor, two steps below sidewalk level.
5. Chimneys: Two brick chimneys in east wall.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doors and doorways: Six-panel main door, flat sunk panels, elliptical doorway with side lights, rusticated wood enframingent.
  - b. Windows and shutters: Six over six light double hung windows, molded frames, adjustable louvered shutters.
7. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Gable roof, pedimented gable end to street.
  - b. Cornice: Molded cornice with rope, or drilled ovolo, bed mold.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Terrace plan with entrance - stair hall on west: Main floor - two parlor on east, guest room and study in rear wing; kitchen and dining room on ground floor; three bedrooms on second floor. Hallway 7'-8" wide. First floor ceilings 9-1/2' high.
2. Stairways: Main stair to second floor, L-shape with landing and short leg at the top; open string, open well, flat sawn step end ornaments; lightly sealed railing with molded ramped hand rail, two rectangular balusters per step, turned newels.
3. Flooring: Wide board floors varying 7-1/2" - 14".
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster - papered walls - wainscoting in principal rooms and along stairway, marked off in panels by small scale moldings.
5. Doors and doorways: Six-panel wood doors, flat panels, delicate moldings. Doorways have deeply molded pilaster trim with corner blocks in principal rooms, later Greek Revival trim on ground floor, simple molded trim elsewhere.
6. Trim: Ceiling cornices in principal rooms, some with decorated frieze. Trim made more elaborate in several places by previous owner.
7. Hardware: Mortise locks with brass knobs, butt hinges.
8. Lighting: Electric
9. Heating: Central hot air. Seven fireplaces with wood mantels, front parlor has one-story wood mantel with deeply projecting mantel shelf and paired colonettes. Rear parlor has two-story mantel with deeply projecting mantel shelf, overmantel panel, maybe later, pilasters at the sides, delicate moldings. Simpler one-story mantels on second floor. Dining room fireplace has deeply projecting mantel shelf and single colonettes at the sides. Cooking fireplace in kitchen.

D. Site

1. Orientation and enclosures: Narrow residential lot, house on sidewalk line at front, small rear yard; wood fences.

Prepared by Osmund R. Osmund, Architect  
National Park Service  
May 1962.